BETEL NUTS

Oy the forter hog thee
forteful C. Inus-
waters they -raul.
Alfred G
de bury

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

http://www.archive.org/details/betelnutswhatthe00guituoft

A. WILL JENKINS

Betel Nuts

What They Say in Hindustan : : :

Rhymed in English by

Arthur Guiterman

The Frontispiece after an oil painting by Will Jenkins

Here's Frolic Truth in oriental guise: A verse may find him who a sermon flies.

Paul Elder and Company

San Francisco and New York

Copyright, 1907
by Paul Elder and Company

LSanskG 968bet
E
628232
1.2.56

The Tomoye Press

Foreword

"Have at you with a Proverb."

These proverbs, and hundreds like them, are ever in the mouths of the people of Hindustan, giving spice and color to their speech even as the Betel Nut — the chewing-gum of the Orient — spices the breath and reddens the lips of the folk of the bazaars. Many of them are more than proverbs; they are really condensations of shrewd, pithy stories illustrative of native life in its varied phases — stories so well known that the repetition of a couplet containing the point conveys the whole tale to the mind of the hearer. It is literature in shorthand.

Some of the quaint sayings in this collection, gleaned in Bengal, in the Punjab, in Rajputana and even among the mountains of Kashmir and Afghanistan, have already appeared in the New York Times and other papers and periodicals, while others are now printed for the first time.

Betel Nuts — 1

God ripes the mangoes,
The Farmer shakes the tree:
God cures the patient.
The Doctor takes the fee.

You have no Debts? Indorse a Note.
You have no Cares? Then buy a Goat.

Now hear the word the Brahman said:
"The Lion's Mane, the Miser's Hoard,
The Serpent's Fang, the Brave Man's Sword
Ye may obtain — when they are dead."

Three were invited — here come Nine!
Water the porridge: all shall dine.

2 Betel Nuts

He laughed derision when his
Foes
Against him cast, each man,
a Stone:
His Friend in anger flung a Rose—
And all the City heard him groan.

They toil not, but decry their bread.
They fight not, they defame the Dead.

Be this engraved:
"The Man who misses his
chance,
The Monkey who misses his branch,
Cannot be saved."

The Goat gave up her life; 'twas not
enough.
The Eater grumbles that the meat is
tough.

Betel Nuts — 3

On deep-rutted roads that are centuries old
The Cart and the Plodder will travel, unled.
A Poet, a Lion, a Man wise and bold
Will beat out new pathways for Plodders to tread.

In Summer, a Fan and a Tale, not too long:
In Winter, a Fire, a Roof, and a Song.

He gave who had naught to give.
And Ruin came.
She went to milk with a sieve—
Is Fate to blame?

A Day or a Minute? a Year or a Moon?—
Now, which does he mean when he says,
"Pretty soon!"

4 Betel Nuts

Our Earth and Sky are weighty querns:
Our Deeds and Strivings heap the grains:
The Unseen Miller turns and turns:
Between the Millstones — what remains?

The Good are two, I dare be sworn,
And one is Dead, and one Unborn.

We sin; yet think to 'scape the ills
That Life hath taught us must ensue.
In every ear the Devil thrills,
"In all the world there's none like you!"

Who cutteth onions sheddeth tears.—
The Mischief-maker lost his ears.

"His bridle is jeweled: with gold he is shod:
I loosen my Steed and commit him to God."
"The World," said the Prophet, "hath ways that are odd:
So tie thy good Steed and commit him to God."

So clever a Son of a Clever Man's Daughter
Am I, that a Cleverer fetches my water.

Why should the Happy Man espouse
That lived so free before?
The Benedict hath but one house.
The Bachelor a score.

He shot at a Sparrow
And spoiled a good Arrow.

6 Betel Nuts

Though losses come and Fate is rough.
On any road my fortune lies.
God's universe is wide enough.
And I have Hands and Feet and Eyes.

Though flung into Ocean I'll rise from beneath.
A Fish on each finger, a Pearl in my teeth.

When golden Sunbeams rill not.
The Jewel shines but ill.
When Fortune smiles, who will not?
When Fortune won't, who will?

Knowledge? Know each other.
Goodness? Love thy Brother.

Thou lackest, O Shirker,
Though long thou hast
prayed?
Know, God's a good Worker,
But loves to have aid.

The Merchant prays for nothing worse
Than Idleness that bears a purse.

Buy not, like a hapless dunce,
Gauds unworth the keeping.
"Dear," O Sahib, weeps but
once;
"Cheap" is always weeping.

Guard thou thy Secret close with all thy
wit,
That e'en the Angels have no news of it.

8 Betel Nuts

That home called "Home" is false, I know;
My home, in truth, is soft and deep.
And yet, as homeward now I go
To take my rest, the people weep!

Liars died in days of old;
Now, they never catch a cold!

Old Hassan turns from craft and vice
To con the Koran's page:
The Cat has killed a thousand Mice,
And makes a pilgrimage.

The torrid Sun melts mountain Snows.
When Anger comes, then Wisdom goes.

Free Comradeship was ours in
work and play:
Our Friendship strengthened
till. we knew not how.
It grew to Love — but Love may have
its day.
We shared one sorrow — what can part
us now!

I live between perils. abandoned by
friends.
Like an ant on a fire-stick lit at both
ends.

Let the Rock fall on the Crock.
Or the Crock upon the Rock.—
The shock will break the Crock.

Own the Horse in Fortune's bloom:
Should Fortune fail thee. be its Groom.

10 Betel Nuts

Let Daughters marry when they can:
Let Sons be wedded when they would.
A woman's husband is a Man:
His husband is his Livelihood.

I had no teeth; He sent me milk. Instead.
Now I have teeth. will He not send me bread?

And what is Glory? What is Shame?
And what is Virtue? What is Sin?
The Man but dies and leaves a Name.—
The Tiger dies and leaves a Skin.

One Good Man here is better far
Than up above ten Angels are.

This under the rose.
But it's true to the letter:
The Man thinks he knows.
But the Woman knows better.

Before thou hast forded the River, O
Brother.
Revile not unduly the Crocodile's
Mother.

By diverse creeds we worship.
thou and I:
The Ear of One Alone re-
ceives our prayer.
Each turns his face in longing toward
the sky
To see his Secret Soul reflected there.

The King shall beg, the Beggar mount
the throne:
Earth laughs at him who calls a place
his own.

12 Betel Nuts

The Chiefs that peasants choose by lot
They ne'er will be afraid of.
The Idol-Carver worships not:—
He knows what gods are made of.

The Goat made friends with the Grass and Wheat;
Now what, oh, what may the poor Goat eat?

Paint on water, plow the sky,
Wash the wind: or, thrice as blindly,
Trust a Trifler, trace a Lie,
Treat a Selfish Craven kindly.

Toil and hoard in sweat and fear?
Money's good,— but much too dear!

The Rope is burned: Its twistings still
The pallid Ash retains.
The Man is dead: What good and ill
He wrought in life remains.

What's in the Melon's Heart, the
Knife-blade knows.
What's in the Soul, the Sword of Sorrow
shows.

Small ills are the fountains
Of most of our groans;
Men trip not on Mountains,—
They stumble o'er Stones.

Forbear! Remember well
There are no fans in Hell!

14 Betel Nuts

God gives where gifts are vain.
Nor, giving, tires.
Man grudging gives to gain
His own desires.

"My Beard is burning!" one will cry.
Another lights his Pipe thereby.

"My wisdom aids the world!"
How sweet
That secret thought of great
and small!
The Sea-gull sleeps with upturned feet
To catch the Sky, if that should fall.

Making, he mars, like a Consummate
Gaby,
Rocking the Cradle while pinching the
Baby.

The wondrous ways of Love are known
To none but Love's adept:
And Tears have language, clear alone
To him whose eyes have wept.

Beware the Foe that falleth back:
The Goat's retreat prepares attack.

I hurled the Missile: With edge unstained
The Shard returned to its parent Clay;
The Birds, all clamoring, whirred away;
The Sin of Seeking to Kill remained.

"Why didst thou spit within the Sacred Bowl?"
"I thought it was the Altar, on my Soul!"

16 Betel Nuts

Toil till your blood is cold.
Drudge till the grave is won:
Man is the slave of Gold.
Gold is the slave of none.

Who sells grain is a Merchant. Heed ye, then:
Who hoards grain is a Murderer of Men.

"O Crocodile, why do you weep
When Gunga in freshet is brown?"
"Alas! for the River is deep!
Alas! for the People will drown!"

The Crane that waited for the Sea to sink
And leave dried fish to feed him, died, I think.

"O Allah, take me!" prayed
Ram Thunder.
Above him crashed and rolled
the Thunder.
"Not now!" he cried in fright and
sorrow.
"Not now, O Lord!—I meant tomor-
row!"

Danger he challenges, laughing and
singing,—
Grasping the Tiger's moustaches, and
swinging.

Terror lurks along the way.
Horror where the moon lies
white.
Fear upon the hills by day.
Dread behind the door at night.

The Sword is the Olive Leaf's Brother:
One Blade in its sheath keeps another.

18 Betel Nuts

The Fool met Fate. "Fair
Maiden, say.
Where goest thou?" quoth he.
And Fate replied, "Hold on thy way
Thou Man.—I follow thee!"

A Pampered Prince will taste the
Choice, alone.
A Starving Dog will bolt a Saltless
Stone.

Can Love devise
That Love shall not be seen?
Nay; Eyes meet Eyes.
And Love slips out between.

The Man that hath a trade must work
thereat.
The Barber, lacking custom, shaved a
Cat.

"My cage of gold is hung with silk:
The King and Court delight in me:
My food is fruit, my drink is milk:—
I want my Nest and Hollow Tree!"

Two Sparrows for one rice-grain made a riot.
The Cat was Arbitrator:—all is quiet.

The Tiger came! She slew him
And bore him from the house:
Then down the drain she threw him:—
And yet, she fears a Mouse!

The harsh-voiced Raven thinks the Owl can sing.
Among the Blind the one-eyed Man is King.

20 Betel Nuts

Gems are lustrous. Youth is bold:
This is sure:
Pearls grow yellow. Men grow old—
There's no cure.

An Owl will lead you to a cave.
A Sin will guide you to a grave.

When toil is o'er, the Pipe is good.
And after bathing, sleep and food:
But Smoking brings delight to none
In darkness, hunger, storm or sun.

Who sports with ruffians earns his broken bones.
What business had the Eggs to dance with Stones?

"My home is a Shell
With an empty shelf.
Oh, bring me a Well
And I'll drown myself!"

Avoid suspicion: When you're walking through
Your neighbor's melon-patch, don't tie your shoe.

The scimitar smites
Where the Buckler is weak.
The Fish has no rights
In the Cormorant's beak.

A Club he carries 'neath his arm:—
His name is "Mr. Do-No-Harm."

Betel Nuts

If you suspect him,
Then reject him.
If you select him,
Don't suspect him.

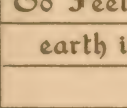
"Oh, like a Drum I suffer foul
despite:—
In daytime soundly beat, hung up at
night!"

A Demon, sick of single life,
In Lanka wed a Monkey Wife:
The whence arose, by Heaven's
Grace
(Lal Das declares), the English Race.

Appraise the Spring before you drink
the Water.
Observe the Mother ere you take the
Daughter.

hough we grasp, in time of trial.
Windle-straws and rotten sticks.
Don't we know the Druggist's Vial
Is the Juggler's Bag of Tricks?

The Baby Bird's Heaven is roofed with a Feather.
To Feet that wear Sandals the whole earth is Leather.



ho cooked this rice?"
"Not I! — that Worthless Hound!"
"'Tis very nice."
"Why — yes — I stirred it round!"

Distrust the man who hates the taste of curds.
The scent of clover and the song of birds.

24 Betel Nuts

The rankling wound your Anger made,
That easy, careless Laugh may heal.
And hurts, yet sore from Biting Steel,
Are cured by sportive Flash of Blade.

"My Foes are so many 'tis peril to count.
I ride on a Tiger and dare not dismount."

His head is rather thick,
But he isn't all a fool:
He knew the Ox might kick,
So he stood behind the Mule.

Be peaceful, yet prepared, for Harm is quick.
A Sheep will bite a Man Without a Stick.

Vain Idlers, think! (If think ye can
That waste your days in wanton revel:)
The Fiend is wrong to tempt the Man.
But Man is wrong to tempt the Devil.

Ben Ali, Ram Chunder and Jussuf are tall.
But the Man with the Club is the Boss of them all.

"Shall Lords of Treasure Stint their dole?
Don't weigh and measure:
Fill my Bowl!"

A Child will judge the Heart: a Woman reads
The Eyes and Lips: a Man requires Deeds.

Betel Nuts

Those that Say and Do, are good, we say:
Those that Do but Say not, great, we call.
Tell, O Fount of Virtue, what are they
That while Saying much, Do naught at all?

The Ass knows seven ways to swim—in stall.
But seeing water, clean forgets them all!

I sought your door in Mercy's name,
And met Rebuffs and Scorns;
The Bee unto the Rose-bush came,
But all it found was Thorns.

I own no tears wherewith to cry;
I have no leisure e'en to die.

If the Breakfast is bad all the
Day will go wrong
('Tis hunger enfeebles the
arm of the strong).
If the Marriage is bad all the Life will
go wrong
(The tongue is a scourge with a barb
in the thong).

The Fair is dull as a sermon's end
To him with never a Coin to spend.

"Shrink into Hell's abodes.
O'erleap the sun—
Flight hath a thousand roads.
My Vengeance, one!"

"I'm like a Camel: Nights and morns
I carry Sweets but feed on Thorns!"

Betel Nuts

The Unbeliever trusts the Eye:
The Ear of Fate hears wondrous things:
Though Mecca's holy man can't fly.
His mullahs' tongues can lend him wings.

A Queen are you and a Queen am I,—
But who will spread the clothes to dry?

Death is the Boding Crow that wheels
O'er homes of low and great.
Death is the Camel Black that kneels
Unbid, at every gate.

Quoth Mittan the Miser when mellow with wine,
"Save Cupboard and Wardrobe, the Whole House is thine!"

"The wells are dry: the cattle die
Amid the shriveled grain.
Above, the crown of the head
is burnt:
Below, the sole of the foot is burnt:—
O Great God, let it rain!"

The Foe that hurts me not, I hardly
fear:
The Friend that helps me not, is never
dear.

Sugar is crisp as the sand,
Sugar is white as a fleece.
Sugar is pleasant and bland.—
But not so sweet as Peace.

A Shower of Honey on a Sugar Shed
Is shamed by speech of Lovers newly
wed.

30 Betel Nuts

When Life is woe,
And Hope is dumb,
The World says, "Go!"
The Grave says, "Come!"

Where ships have steered, the caravan
may trail:
Where winds the caravan, the ship may
sail.

A thousand times I dived, yet
found
No Pearl: the fault was not
With Me, nor Thee, nor yet the Sea.—
'Twas my unhappy Lot.

Smile at Wrongs thou canst not right:
Kiss the Hand thou darest not bite.

"O Allah," prays the Cat in
hungry zeal,
"Send blindness on my Lord,
that I may steal!"
"O Allah," prays the Dog, "endow
with meat
My Lord, who, being filled, shall bid me
eat!"

Who gives a Man a Child to nurse,
Or trusts a Woman with a Purse?

Lal Mir's Cat is grown too fat
To hunt her prey and snatch
it.
A mouse she saw and wagged her paw
To bid her Master catch it.

Why ask my answer, strong-armed un-
believer?—
What answer can the Mutton give the
Cleaver?

Betel Nuts

Though called, when up and
earning,
Thy Sweetheart's Darling
One,
In want and fever's burning
Thou art thy Mother's Son.

God that makes the Egg to live,
Shall Man ask and Thou not give?

Choose: Peace or Death! What
good is life
In hate and fear?
Let One, or Both: or else our Strife
Be buried here!

I stoned the Mango Tree and sweet
fruit fell.
My Foe misuseth me,—I'll use him
well.

The Teeth are thirty-two, in sharp
array;
The Tongue is lone and
weak, and yet among
The silent Teeth it dwells, and talks all
day.
Yet takes no harm:—how clever is
the Tongue!

She scolds at the Thunder, she scowls
at the light,
She spits on the thorn-bush and dares it
to fight!

In evil days
Draw good from every harm.
Your roof's ablaze?—
The Flames will keep you warm.

"He has killed a thousand men!"
"Ah! he's half a doctor then."

34 Betel Nuts

Above the lintel wrote the lagging guest:
"An Uncle's Dwelling is a Place of Rest."
His Cousin scrawled beneath that fervent phrase,
"If One remain not more than Seven Days."

Are we babes for threats to fright?
"Mother's Bear" will never bite.

The Rain of June with crystal spears
Assails the Mold. Our acres thrive,
And Famine's Footprint disappears,
And Five becomes as Thirty-five.

A Word informs the Wise at once:
A Hundred Lashes teach the Dunce.

Man hath one Beauty: Dress. the
Pundit's hold.
Hath Beauties fifty-score.
Ten thousand Beauties glow in Gems
and Gold;
In Love. ten million more.

To all their own repasts:
The Swan eats Pearls. or fasts.

The Donkey turns an hungry eye
Upon the fields all bare and dry.
Then waxes fat. the happy
Ass.—
He think he's eaten all the grass!

A Lie has no beginning.
No Liar owns to sinning.

36 Betel Nuts

The Comb was the Bee's.
But by Man it is eaten.
The Sin was the Flea's.
But the Bedding is beaten.

O crafty Bee. which dost thou bring
To me — the Honey or the Sting?

Do Flowers lose their fragrance when they bloom where none may mark?
Are Rubies dull and worthless when they lie on mountains lone?
Is Honey harsh and bitter when 'tis eaten in the dark?
Is Love the less delightful when to all the world unknown?

The Merchant has no time to smoke a pipe: —
Who finds a Crow asleep when Figs are ripe?

We're stripped as bare as a bone!
The Thief and his Stick were Two.
My Father and I were all alone.
So, pray, what could we do?

Within the Temple thrives the Scamp.
'Tis darkest underneath the Lamp.

The Jackals show their teeth, the Monkeys chatter,
The puissant Sparrows bluster,—does it matter?
The Dogs may tear his red caparison,
But, undisturbed, the Elephant goes on.

I've found my Knife,—but where are you, O Hound!
When I find you, my Knife cannot be found!

38 Betel Nuts

The Elephant is guided by the
Goad:
A Club will keep the Bullock
to the road:
The Bit and Spur subdue the restive
Horse.
And naught controls a Simpleton but
Force.

Though gentlest hands re-knit the
silken Chain
Of Severed Friendship, still the Knots
remain.

One glimpse of Home will make
A Cripple sound,
Nor Head nor Feet will ache
When Homeward bound.

The Rains have come! The Rice-
blades spring!
The Farmer cares not who is King!

My wrath is more than tongue can utter!
The Cat beneath my hand shall quail!
'Twas not enough to steal the butter,—
The Vixen sniffed, and shook her tail!

We measure Towers by the Shadows thrown,
And Great Men by the Slanders idly blown.

A laugh is due
When Fate's grim jests are hurled.
What's Death to you
Is Fun for all the world.

She's vain and saucy, proud and idle,—
An Old Mare with a New Red Bridle.

40 Betel Nuts

The eager Fish
Repents within the Net.
Young lovers Wish.
And married men Regret.

Death took him off.
But cured his cough.

Lost and gone, like the Fame of
Kings,
Like a Woman's Faith, like a
Horse's Wings,
Like the Morning Mist, like the
Evening Red,
Like the Horns that grew on the
Donkey's Head!

His sympathy is cold: Beneath
The Weeping Eyes are Laughing
Teeth.

The Water-lily spreads her petals white:
The Moon, twice forty thousand leagues above,
Upon her pours a flood of tender light.
Oh, Time and Space are naught to them that love!

Whose hands are clever, Labors all his days:
Whose Tongue is clever, Speaks — the World obeys.

My Hair hung low, a glossy Braid:
Thy Beard was down upon thy Chin:
Our Love, the Love of Youth and Maid,
To which all other Love is Sin!

The Roots of Strife are three, all told:
A Woman first, then Land, then Gold.

Betel Nuts

Love must love, and Love must
true;
Who the flame of Love may
smother!
I am dying, Love, for you;
You are dying for Another!

When Feasts are spread, the Doctor
mixes Pills.
In Fifty Dishes lie One Hundred Ills.

No more he dances, feasts and
sings;
The Married man is bound
to Toil.
His mind is full of Other Things,—
And those are Salt and Wood and Oil.

What's that? You "Saw?"—I won't
believe a word!
You only "Saw!"—I'll tell you what
I Heard!

The day he came we called him
"Friend":
The second day we styled him
"Guest":
The third, "Our Caller": at the end
Of seven days, "A Very Pest!"

Forbear to kill him for the sake
Of all the Widows thou wouldst make.

"My Love departs with dawning
light;
Mine eyes are dark with
sorrow.
I pray Thee, Lord, make such a Night
That there shall be no Morrow!"

He's like the Golden Knife: unfit,
they say,
For any use, too good to throw away.

Betel Nuts

The Butter that the Farmer sold
was bad:
The Merchant's weights were
false, and light as air;
Each thought himself a Cheat, and so
was glad.—
And yet the Bargain that they made
was fair.

The Judge, though knowing naught,
must try to tell
What Plaintiff and Defendant know
too well.

The Farmer prays for Rain,
The Washerman for Sun;
If Prayers were not in vain
The World would be undone.

A Garden Wall is easy leaping:
The Blind Man's Wife is in God's
Keeping.

To all the World thy Bosom's
Joy disclose.
So Men shall envy thee thy
High Estate:
But let thine own Roof cover all thy
Woes—
Tie not thy Troubles to the Village
Gate!

My own good Son is a Son indeed:
My Neighbor's Son is a Worthless
Weed!

They find life sweet
That Earn and Eat:
And they will earn
That Lose and Learn.

Fair is the Hope of a distant day:
Blue are the Hills that are far away.

Betel Nuts

These Letters Black are Seeds, the which my Pen
In snowy furrows diligently sows:
The Harvest shall be reaped by other men,—
But what shall be that Harvest, no one knows.

E'en Cleanliness is sometimes out of place:
The fussy Housewife washed the Tiger's face.

The Donkey to the Camel said,
"How dainty are your feet!"
The Camel to the Donkey said,
"Your voice is very sweet!"

Strangers serve the Swindler's ends:
Merchants, only, cheat their Friends.

The Promise may be broken
That's made when Youth is new.
But not the Promise spoken
'Twixt Thirty-Teeth-and-Two.

Who goes to Law cries out, "Alack!
Come, Poverty, sit on my back!"

Good Madam Cat, you've bitten off my Tail:
Now let me go, to squeak through all the house
And rummage shelf and cupboard, tooth and nail:
For Life is sweet, e'en to a Tailless Mouse.

The Jar of Wine for the Rich Man's Hall:
The Wayside Spring is the Friend of All.

48 Betel Nuts

Six years thy Son is all his
Mother's own
To love and tend:
Twelve more he is thy Care.—and then
alone
Becomes thy Friend.

Look to thy Letters, thy Horse's Girth
Thyself, though served by all the Slaves
on Earth.

In August drouth the Jackal
Whelp was born:
September poured his waters
on the plains:
Then cried the Cub in wonder, "I'll be
sworn,
In all my Life I've never seen such
rains!"

Rust cracks the empty Pan:
Sloth breaks the Husbandman.

The End of the Book

The Caravan hath reached the Journey's Goal,
And glad is Wayworn Friend embracing Friend:
The Pen hath reached the Bottom of the Scroll,
And, gladder still, the Pundit writes, "The End."

628232

LSansk
G968bet
.E

Guiterman, Arthur
Betel nuts.

University of Toronto
Library

DO NOT
REMOVE
THE
CARD
FROM
THIS
POCKET

Acme Library Card Pocket
LOWE-MARTIN CO. LIMITED